

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PK
SUBJECT: THE ALTERNATIVES TO BHUTTO

1. INTRODUCTION: PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO, IN HIS MAY 13 SPEECH
CALLING FOR A NATIONAL REFERENDUM ON HIS LEADERSHIP IMPLIED THE
CHOICE FACING PAKISTAN WAS A SIMPLE ONE- BHUTTO OR CHAOS. THIS
REFRAIN HAS BEEN ECHOED BY THE SHAH WHO HAS TOLD US THAT IF
BHUTTO LEAVES THE POLITICAL SCENE, PAKISTAN WILL MOST PROBABLY
DEGENERATE INTO ANARCHY. WE DO NOT THINK THE CHOICE IS SO STARK.
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WHILE BHUTTO IN HIS FIRST FIVE YEARS PROVIDED AT LEAST SUPER-
FICIAL STABILITY, IT IS NOW OBVIOUS THAT HE WAS ONLY ABLE TO
PAPER OVER, WITH HIS POLITICAL AGILITY SUPPORTED BY INCREASING
AUTHORITARIANISM, FUNDAMENTAL ETHNIC, LINGUISTIC, CULTURAL,
SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DIVISIONS IN PAKISTAN. AS THESE
HAVE BOILED TO THE SURFACE IN THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN AND ITS
VIOLENT AFTERMATH, A CASE CAN BE MADE THAT BHUTTO'S POLITICAL
DEMISE WOULD IN ITSELF RESTORE SHORT-TERM EPABILITY, WHILE HIS
CONTINUATION IN OFFICE WOULD ONLY AGGRAVATE THE DIVISIONS THAT
MAY NOW BE THREATENING THE VERY FABRIC AND PERHAPS THE INTEGRITY

OF PAKISTAN. THIS MESSAGE DOES NOT ATTEMPT TO ARGUE THE CASE IN TDO- OR ANT-BHUTTO TERMS, BUT SIMPLY TO EXAMINE THE IMPLICATIONS OF HIS FALL FROM OFFICE AND THE VIABILITY OF POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVES. IT ALSO ATTEMPTS TO PUT IN PERSPECTIVE THE DANGER OF DISINTEGRATION WHICH WE BELIEVE IS IMPLICIT IN THE PRESENT SITUATION BUT STILL REMOTE IN PRACTICAL TERMS. END INTRODUCTION.

2. QFY CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVES TO BHUTTO MUST TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE CHANGED POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT IN PAKISTAN SINCE 1971. THE PRIME MINISTER HAS MADE A MAJOR IMPACT ON PAKISTAN'S POLITICAL EXPERIENCE THROUGH HIS EFFORTS TO POPULARIZE THE POLITICAL PROCESS. BY ASTUTE USE OF HIS POWERS HE HAS MANAGED TO INCREASE THE GOP'S INVOLVEMENT IN EVER EXPANDING AREAS OF PAKISTAN'S LIFE. AS FAR-REACHING HAS BEEN BHUTTO'S EFFORT TO TRANSFORM PAKISTAN'S INSTITUTIONS IN WAYS WHICH ENHANCE HIS POLITICAL POWER.

3. THE POWER OF POSSIBLE COMPETITORS IN THE CIVIL SERVICE, THE RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP, THE WEALTHY CLASSES AND OTHER ELITES HAS BEEN CURTAILED BY THE REFORMS BHUTTO HAS INTRODUCED. IN THE PROCESS LARGE SEGMENTS OF SOCIETY THAT WERE FORMERLY EXCLUDED FROM PARTICIPATION IN THE POLITICAL LIFE OF THE COUNTRY MUST NOW BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT BY WHATEVER OR WHOMEVER FOLLOWS BHUTTO. AS THE POPULARIZATION OF POLITICAL LIFE IN PAKISTAN HAS OCCURRED, THERE HAS ALSO BEEN A DEMAND FOR WHAT PEOPLE SEE AS THE BENEFITS OF DEMOCRACY - NO CORRUPTION, RESPONSIVE GOVERNMENT, LESS CONFIDENTIAL

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ARBITRARINESS IN DECISION MAKING AND ENFORCEMENT PROCEDURES.

4. WHILE BHUTTO DURING HIS FIRST FIVE YEARS IN OFFICE HAS POPULARIZED POLITICS IN PAKISTAN, THE STRUCTURE HE HAS CREATED IS A FRAGILE ONE. BHUTTO'S PERVASIVE ROLE IN ALL ASPECTS OF PAKISTAN LIFE AMAZE AND PERPLEX BOTH HIS SUPPORTERS AND DETRACTORS. HE HAS BEEN ABLE TO EXERT DECISIVE INFLUENCE OVER ASPECTS OF PAKISTAN LIFE THAT HERETOFORE REMAINED AT MOST INDIRECTLY AFFECTED BY THE MAN ON TOP. THE CHANGES IN THE POWER STRUCTURE HE HAS EFFECTED, PARTICULARLY THE POLITICIZATION OF IMPORTANT SEGMENTS OF PAKISTAN LIFE HAVE FUNDAMENTALLY TRANSFORMED THE COUNTRY. ALTHOUGH THE BHUTTO SYSTEM MAY SURVIVE IN ITS PRESENT FORM WITH HIS DEPARTURE, ITS SUBSTANCE WOULD CHANGE DEPENDING ON WHO AND WHAT COMES AFTER.

5. WHATEVER FORM OF GOVERNMENT WOULD FOLLOW BHUTTO WILL HAVE TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THIS MORE POLITICIZED ELECTORATE OF THE 1970'S THE DAYS OF THE 1950'S WHEN AN EFFICIENT, EDUCATED, ELITIST BUREAUCRACY MANAGED TO KEEP THE AFFAIRS OF STATE MOVING DURING TIMES OF POLITICAL UNREST CANNOT BE RECAPTURED. THIS TYPE

SYSTEM WOULD BE UNACCEPTABLE OVER THE LONG-TERM TO THE NEW ELECTORATE, AND THE BUREAUCRACY TODAY IS NOT CAPABLE OF COMPLETELY ASSUMING ITS FORMER ROLE. IN THE WAKE OF BHUTTO'S

POPULARIZATION OF THE POLITICAL PROCESS AND HIS EFFORTS TO MAKE IT MORE RESPONSIVDDTO HIS DIRECTION, THE BUREAUCRACY HAS BECOME A POLITICIZED FORCE. ALTHOUGH IT WOULD REPRESENT AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT OF CONTINUITY IN THE UNCERTAIN ATMOSPHERE WHICH WOULD EXIST IF BHUTTO LEFT, AND WOULD PLAY A KEY ROLE IN KEEPING THE COUNTRY FUNCTIONING, IT CAN NO LONGER BE AN INDEPENDENT FORCE CAPABLE OF RULING THE NATION.

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6. THE FIRST AND MOST OBVIOUS ALTERNATIVE TO BTUTTO WOULD BE THE MILITARY. ANY POST-BHUTTO SCENARIO WOULD MOST LIKELY INCLUDE, AT LEAST IN THE SHORT TERM, A ROLE FOR THE MILITARY. WHILE AN ARMY TAKEOVER MIGHT SOLVE SEVERAL SHORT-TERM PROBLEMS INCLUDING THE LAW AND ORDER SITUATION (ALTHOUGH THE ARMY'S POTENTIAL EFFECTIVENESS IN AN AFTER-BHUTTO SITUATION IS BEING ERODED BY ITS CONTINUING SUPPORT FOR THE PRIME MINISTER, IT IS NOT THE LONG TERM ANSWER TO THE PRESENT CRISIS. WE BELIEVE THIS VIEW IS ALSO HELD BY SENIOR MILITARY OFFICERS. UNDER THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES WE ASSUME THE ARMY WOULD ONLY TAKE POWER IF IT WERE COMPLETELY
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CONVINCED THAT THERE WAS NO POLITICAL SOLUTION TO THE PRESENT

CRISIS POSSIBLE AND/OR IF THE COUNTRY WAS ON THE BRINK OF CIVIL WAR OR IN DANGER OF DISINTEGRATION.

7. IF THE PRESENT CRISIS ENDS WITH FULL MILITARY CONTROL AND BHUTTO OUT OF POWER, IT WOULD THEREFORE MOST PROBABLY BE FOR A LIMITED PERIOD OF TIME. THE SITUATION TODAY IS CONSIDERABLY CHANGED FROM THAT OF 1958 WHEN AYUB KHAN AIDED POWER AND MOST OF THE DIFFERENCES ARGUE FOR ONLY A LIMITED PERIOD OF MILITARY RULE. PERHAPS THE MOST IMPORTANT CHANGE IS WITHIN THE MILITARY ITSELF. THE CAUTION EXHIBITED BY THE MILITARY'S SENIOR OFFICERS IS A REFLECTION NOT ONLY OF THE ARMY'S HIGHLY PROFESSIONAL AND DISCIPLINED ORGANIZATION BUT ALSO AN INDICATION OF CONCERN IN THE MILITARY THAT IT MIGHT ONCE AGAIN BECOME THE FOCUS OF DISCONTENT IF IT BECOMES TOO INVOLVED IN POLITICS.

8. CONCERN OVER WHAT COMES AFTER BHUTTO FOCUSES IN PART ON THE STRUCTURE OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN PAKISTAN. THE POLITICAL PARTY SYSTEM, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE TIGHTLY ORGANIZED JAMAT-I-ISLAMI RELIGIOUS PARTY, IS CHARACTERIZED BY A WEAK STRUCTURE, INDISCIPLINE WITHIN THE PARTIES AND SHIFTING ALLIANCES. IN MOST CASES POLITICAL PARTIES ARE THE CREATION OF ONE INDIVIDUAL WHO SEEKS TO FURTHER HIS OWN POLITICAL CAREER AND USES HIS PARTY AS MEANS TO THAT END. SINCE PARTIES IN PAKISTAN HAVE GENERALLY NOT BEEN FOUNDED ON IDEOLOGICAL GROUNDS, LOYALTY IS BASED ON PERSONAL ALLEGIANCE TO THE HEAD OF THE PARTY OR ON THE PERCEPTION OF PARTY MEMBERS THAT THEY HAVE MORE TO GAIN PERSONALLY BY SUPPORTING THEIR PARTY HEAD IN LIEU OF ANOTHER.

9. THE PPP IS A PRODUCT OF THIS SYSTEM. IT IS HELD TOGETHER BY THE DYNAMISM AND POLITICAL SAGACITY OF ONE MAN. BHUTTO'S ABSENCE FROM THE POLITICAL SCENE AND NEW ELECTIONS WOULD HIGHLIGHT THE DEEP DIVISIONS THAT EXIST WITHIN THE PPP. ALTHOUGH THE PPP NUMBERS SOME TEN MILLION MALE MEMBERS AND HAS A WELL ORGANIZED STRUCTURE OF OFFICE BEARERS AND COMMITTEES AT DIFFERENT LEVELS IT RELIES ON THE CREATION OF BHUTTO ALONE. BHUTTO'S PERSONALITY IS CONFIDENTIAL

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THE VASIVE ROLE IN CONTROLLING THE PARTY BY PERSONALLY APPROVING ALL OFFICE BEARERS DOWN TO THE DISTRICT LEVEL AND DEALING RUTHLESSLY WITH THOSE WHO OPPOSE HIM HAS INHIBITED AN INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF PPP PARTY POLITICS. IN ADDITION THE PPP REMAINS A VAST UMBRELLA ORGANIZATION COMPRISING A BROAD SPECTRUM OF FACTIONS, IDEOLOGICAL PERSUASIONS AND RIVAL PERSONALITIES. AS A RESULT THERE IS A GOOD POSSIBILITY THAT THE ORGANIZATION WOULD UNRAVEL IF HE DEPARTED. IT IS THEREFORE HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT IN THE AFTERMATH OF BHUTTO'S DEPARTURE ANY PPP POLITICAL FIGURES WOULD IMMEDIATELY BE ABLE TO ASSUME NATIONAL LEADERSHIP.

10. IF BHUTTO LEAVES, THE PARTY WILL BE SERIOUSLY WEAKENED BY DEFECTIONS AND INTERNAL RIFTS AS VARIOUS FACTIONS AND AMBITIOUS PPP POLITICIANS VIE FOR CONTROL. SINCE THE PPP ENCOMPASSES INDIVIDUALS WHOSE BELIEFS SPAN THE ENTIRE POLITICAL SPECTRUM IT IS

CONCEIVABLE THAT THE PPP COULD SPLIT INTO SEVERAL SMALLER PARTIES AS WELL. WE EXPECT THAT THE PPP WOULD CONSEQUENTLY REMAIN A SHADOW OF ITS PRESENT SELF FOR SOME TIME TO COME. ON THE OTHER HAND IF BHAWTO REMAINED IN CONTROL OF THE PARTY EVEN THOUGH HE HAD LOST THE PRIME MINISTERSHIP, IT COULD REMAIN A FORMIDABLE ORGANIZATION CAPABLE OF RETURNING TO POWER.

11. THE PNA, IN THE TRADITION OF PAK PARTY POLITICS, IS AN AMALGAM OF DISPARATE ELEMENTS AND POLITICAL PARTIES THAT ARE UNITED IN AN UNEASY ALLIANCE FOR THE SOLE PURPOSE OF OUSTING BHUTTO FROM POWER. MOST OBSERVERS FEEL THAT SHOULD THEY BE SUCCESSFUL, THE PNA WOULD BREAK UP SINCE IT WOULD HAVE LOST ITS BASIC RAISON D'ETRE. HOWEVER, THERE ARE INDIVIDUALS WITHIN THE PNA WHO ARE TODAY VIEWED AS NATIONAL LEADERS OR POTENTIALLY SO AND WHO ARE SEEN AS POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVES TO BHUTTO OR THE ARMY. FORMER AIR MARSHAL ASGHAR KHAN IS THE MOST PROMINENT. PRESIDENT OF THE TEHRIK-I-ISTIQLAL AND DE FACTO LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION, HE IS WELL RESPECTED FOR HIS PROBITY AND IS CONSIDERED TO BE ONE OF THE MORE HONEST POLICIANS IN PAKISTAN TODAY. BHUTTO FEARS ASGHAR'S NATIONAL POPULARITY MORE THAN THAT OF ANY OTHER OPPOSITION LEADER.

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AMEMBASY KABUL

AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMCONSUL LAHORE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

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12. ANOTHER MEMBER OF THE ALLIANCE, MUFTI MAHMUD IS ALSO CONSIDERED BY SOME TO BE A POTENTIAL ALTERNATIVE TO BHUTTO. A RESPECTED RELIGIOUS FIGURE, HE IS PRESIDENT OF THE JAMIAT-I-ULEMA-I-ISLAM (JUI), A CONSERVATIVE RELIGIOUS PARTY AND IS PRESIDENT OF THE PNA, THE DE JURE HEAD OF THE OPPOSITION. WHILE SOME REGARD HIM AS A LIGHTWEIGHT, HE IS POLITICALLY SAGACIOUS AND NOT TO BE RULED OUT OF A LEADERSHIP ROLE IN COASTION POLITICS. ANOTHER FIGURE MENTIONED AS A POSSIBLE SUCCESSOR IS WALI KHAN, THE JAILED PRESIDENT OF THE NOW BANNED NATIONAL AWAMI PARTY (NAP). A PUSHTU NATIONALIST, HE IS CONSIDERED BY MANY TO BE CONFIDENTIAL

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THS MOST POLITICALLY ASTUTE OF THE LOT. ALTHOUGH HE HAS LITTLE SUPPORT IN PUNJAB, THE LARGEST AND POLITICALLY MOST IMPORTANT PROVINCE, HE IS NONETHELESS AN IMPORTANT FORCE IN PAKISTAN'S NATIONAL POLITCS. HE HAS CONSIDERABLE SUPPORT IN THE NWFP AND BALUCHISTAN. HIS WIFE'S EMERGENCE IN NATIONAL POLITICS HAS EVOKED A RESONANCE IN THE PUNJAB AND COULD ENHANCE WALI KHAN'S ABILITY TO CUT A SWATH WIDER THAN THE FRONTIER.

13. WE CAN ALSO ENVISION VARIOUS ALLIANCES BEING FORMED, ANY ONE OF WHICH MIGHT BE A VIABLE GOVERNMENT. FOR EXAMPLE, SGHAR KHAN COULD LEAD A CENTRIST COALITION OF PARTIES WHICH COULD INCLUDE HIS OWN TEHRIQ, ELEMENTS FROM THE MORE CONSERVATIVE SIDE OF A DISINTEGRATING PPP, AND THE JAMAT-I-ULEMA-E-PAKISTAN (JUP) ONE OF THE RELIGIOUS PARTIES WITH A FOLLOWING IN THE SIND WHICH WAS FORMERLY IN AN UNOFFICIAL ALLIANCE WITH THE TEHRIQ. ANOTHER POSSIBLE COMBINATION IS ONE INCLUDING A REVITALIZED NAP LED BY WALI KHAN, IN COOPERATION WITH MUFTI MAHMUD'S JUI (A COALITION WHICH RULED BALUCHISTAN AND THE FRONTIER IN 1972) SUPPORTED BY CONSERVATIVE ELEMENTS OF THE MUSLIM LEAGUE AND THE PPP. THERE ARE VARIOUS OTHER COMBINATIONS AS WELL.

14. SUCH GROUPINGS ARE INHERENTLY FRAGILE AND THERE IS NO QUAR- ANTEE THAT EVEN IF SUCH AN ALLIANCE WERE FORMED AFTER BHUTTO THAT IT COULD GIVE STABILITY TO THE NATION. CERTAINLY IF BHUTTO LEFT THE SCENE, THERE WOULD BE CONSIDERABLE CONFUSION AND POLITICAL MACHINATIONS IN PAKISTAN. THERE ARE VIABLE ALTER- NATIVES TO HIS RULE, HOWEVER, IN TERMS OF LEADERS, NEW ALLIANCES AND THE EXISTENCE OF A FOUNDATION FOR A REPRESENTATIVE AND RESPONSIVE SYSTEM. WE CANNOT PREDICT WHO WOULD COME OUT ON TOP OR DESCRIBE EXACTLY THE FRAMEWORK OF THE POLITICAL SYSTEM THAT WOULD EMERGE, BUT ONE CANNOT RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY OF A VIABLE AND STABLE GOVERNMENT.

15. PAKISTAN HAS ONLY BRIEFLY EXPERIMENTEDSWITH DEMOCRACY. ALTHOUGH THERE HAVE BEEN PROTESTATIONS THAT A DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM EXISTED, BOTH IN THE MID-FIFTIES AND AFTER BHUTTO ASSUMED POWER, CONFIDENTIAL

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IN REALITY A DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM - WITH THE OPPORTUNITY IT GIVES FOR DISPARATE ELEMENTS IN THE POPULATION TO HAVE A SAY IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS - WAS TRIED ONLY BRIEFLY DURING BHUTTO'S EARLY YEARS IN POWER. ONE COULD ARGUE THAT PAKISTAN IS THE TYPE OF COUNTRY, WITH WIDELY DIVERGENT SOCIAL, ETHNIC, CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC GROUPS PLUS A PLETHORA OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CLASSES, WHERE A DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM MIGHT BE THE ONLY ONE THAT CAN EVENTUALLY HOLD THE RXUNTRY TOGETHER WITHOUT CONTINUAL STRIFE.

16. HISTORICALLY, PAKISTAN'S VARIOUS INTEREST GROUPS AND CLASSES HAVE LIVED UNDER AUTHORITARIAN RULE UNTIL THEIR DIFFERENCES AND DISAGREEMENTS BOILED OVER INTO INTERNECINE WARFARE - EITHER LITERALLY OR POLITICALLY. A DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT, ONE WHICH WOULD ALLOW THE DIFFERENCES TO BE RESOLVED PEACEFULLY IN THE LEGISLATIVE AND JUDICIAL ARENA RATHER THAN VIOLENTLY IN THE STREETS, IS AN IDEA APPEALING TO MANY PAKISTANIS WHO NOTE THAT THE 1973 CONSTITUTION, UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED BY ALL FACTIONS, HAS NOT YET BEEN GIVEN A REAL CHANCE. SOME ARGUE THT A COALITION GOVERN-
NMENT UNDER SOMEONE LIKE ASGHAR KHAN WOULD LET THIS EXPERITENT HAPPEN. IF IT DID, IT MIGHT PROVE TO BE THE ANSWER FOR WHICH PAKISTAN HAS BEEN SEARCHING. IF IT FAILED, THEN AT THE LEAST THE NATION WOULD RETURN TO INSTABILITY AND POLITICAL CONFUSION; AT THE MOST IT WOULD FACE PROBAEBLE ARMY RAPE AND RENEWED THREATS TO PAKISTAN'S NATIONAL UNITY.

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17. IN AN ATMOSPHERE IN WHICH LARGE SEGMENTS OF THE POPULATION DENY THAT BHUTTO HAS A LEGITIMATE MANDATE, THE THREAT OF RENEWED LARGE SCALE CIVIL DISORDERS WILL REMAIN. THUS BHUTTO'S CLAIM THAT THE ALTERNATIVE TO HIS LEADERSHIP IS UNENDING CHAOS AND CIVIL DISORDERS IS NOT NECESSARILY CORRECT ANY MANY WOULD ARGUE THAT HIS DEPARTURE WOULD HASTEN A POLITICAL SOLUTION. IF BHUTTO DOES REMAIN IN POWER AND ACTIVE OPPOSITION TO HIS RULE REMAINS, HE WOULD BE FORCED TO CONTINUE HIS EFFORTS TO SUPPRESS AND
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DISCREDIT THE PNA.

18. AN AREA OF CONCERN IF BHUTTO REMAINS IN POWER FACED WITH CONTINUED AGITATION BY THE PNA IS THE EFFECT THIS MIGHT HAVE ON PAKISTAN'S FOREIGN RELATIONS. WE HAVE ALREADY SEEN THAT BHUTTO WAS WILLING TO RISK DAMAGING RELATIONS WITH THE US BY PUBLICLY ACCUSING US OF INTERFERENCE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF PAKISTAN IN ORDER TO GAIN PERSONAL POLITICAL ADVANTAGE. IF HIS PRESENT EFFORTS AGAINST THE OPPOSITON PROVE INEFFECTIVE, BHUTTO MAY FEEL COMPELLED TO LOOK FOR ADDITIONAL SCAPEGOATS. INDIA AND AFGHANISTAN ARE POSSIBLE FUTURE TARGETS OF HIS ACCUSATIONS. IF HE DOES ACCUSE EITHER OR BOTH, HE RISKS A SERIOUS DETERIORATION OF RELATIONS WITH THESE COUNTRIES. HE IS NO DOUBT AWARE THAT IN MAKING SUCH ACCUSATIONS HE STANDS TO UNDO HIS EFFORTS OF THE PAST FIVE YEARS IN NORMALIZING RELATIONS WITH HIS NEIGHBORS. HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE THAT IF PRESSED HE IS PREPARED TO LAKE THIS RISK, PARTICULARLY IF OPPSOITION TO HIM GROWS TO A CRITICAL LEVEL IN THE NWFP AND BALUCHISTAN.

19. BHUTTO AND THE SHAH HAVE ALSO RAISED THE SPCTER THAT CONTINUED UNREST WILL EVENTUALLY LEAD TO THE DISINTEGRATION OF PAKISTAN. THEDSPOINT TO EAST PAKISTAN AS AN EXAMPLE OF THE FISSIPAROUS TENDENCIES WHICH COULD RECUR. ALTHOUGH THE DESIRE FOR GREATER PROVINCIAL AUTONOMY, ESPECIALLY IN THE FRONTIER AND BALUCHISTAN IS A FACT OF PAKISTANI POLITICAL LIFE, WE THINK IT IS FALLACIOUS LO DRAW A PARALLEL WITH EAST PAKISTAN. FOR OBVIOUS GEOPOLITICAL REASONS THE PAKISTAN ARMY WAS NOT ABLE TO INTRODUCE ENOUGH FORCE INTO EAST PAKISTAN TO HALT THE INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT. ANY ATTEMPTS TO ENCOURAGE SUCH MOVEMENTS IN TODAY'S CONTIGUOUS PAKISTAN WOULD BE MUCH MORE DIFFICULT. WE CONSIDER IT HIGHLY UNLIKELY THE ARMY WOULD ALLOW CONDITIONS TO GO THAT FAR.

20. THE PAKISTAN ARMY IS VERY UNUSUAL IN THAT IT IS A WELL DISCIPLINED FORCE WITH DEEPLY ENTRENCHED TRADITIONS AND A STRONG ESPRIT DE CORPS - MORE A WESTERN THAN A THIRD WORLD ARMY -

OPERATING IN A COUNTRY CHARACTERIZED BY POLITICAL INSTABILITY
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SINCE ITS INCEPTION AND IN MANY WAYS REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
THIRD WORLD POLITICALLY. IT IS THEREFORE DIFFICULT TO ENVISAGE
THE ARMY ALLOWING THE COUNTRY TO BE PULLED APART.

21. THE ACHILLE'S HEEL OF THE MILITARY'S RESOLVE TO STEM THE
COUNTRY'S DISINTEGRATION BECAUSE OF DOMESTIC FORCES IS THE FACT
THAT IT IS AN ALMOST ALL PUNJABI ARMY (ABOUT 95PERCENT OF THE
ENLISTED MEN ARE FROM THE PUNJAB). IF THE ARMY BECOMES THE
CENTRAL VEHICLE FOR MAINTENANCE OF THE COUNTRY'S UNITY, AND THERE
IS DISSENSION AND DISCONTENT IN THE OTHER PROVINCES, ESPECIALLY
BALUCHISTAN AND THE FRONTIER, THE STRAINS THAT MIGHT ARISE
BETWEEN THE PUNJABI ARMY AND DISSIDENTS IN THE OTHER PROVINCES
COULD PLACE A HEAVY BURDEN ON THE TIES HOLDING THE FOUR
PROVINCES TOGETHER. AS LONG AS THE PAKISTAN MILITARY REMAINS THE
WELL DISCIPLINED AND RELATIVELY EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATION IT IS
TODAY, HOWEVER, T SHOULD BE ABLE TO EFFECTIVELY COUNTER NEARLY
ALL FORSEEABLE CHALLENGES TO THE NATION'S UNITY.

22. IT IS POSSIBLE, HOWEVER, TO BUILD A SCENARIO WHICH COULD
LEAD TO THE NATION'S DISINTEGRATION. IF FIGHTING BETWEEN THE PNA
AND BHUTTO'S SUPPORTERS ESCALATED, IF SEPARATIST TENDENCIES IN
THE FRONTIER AND BALUCHISTAN WERE STRENGTHENED AND CLASHES TOOK
PLACE IN BOTH PROVINCES BETWEEN TRIBESMEN AND THE MILITARY, AND
IF THE OPPOSITION TURNED TO URBAN GUERRILLA TACTICS TO OVERTHROW
THE GOVERNMENT, THE STRAINS ON THE MILITARY, IF IT DID NOT
INTERVENE TO TAKE OVER THE GOVERNMENT, WOULD BE NEARLY OVER-
WHELMING. EVEN IF THE ARMY DID EVENTUALLY MOVE TO TAKE POWER, IT
MIGHT BY THEN BE SO DISCREDITED IT WOULD BE UNABLE TO STOP
THE STRUGGLE.

23. IN SUCH A SITUATION, VARIOUS OF PAKISTAN'S NEIGHBORS, IN-
CLUDING THE SOVIET UNION, AFGHANISTAN, INDIA AND EVEN IRAN, MIGHT
BELIEVE THERE WAS A CLEAR AND PRESENT DANGER OF PAKISTAN'S DIS-
INTEGRATION:. AND THEREFORE GIVE DIRECT AID A BOTH FINANCIAL AND
MILITARY - TO VARIOUS COMPETING FACTIONS IN THE COUNTRY. THIS
WOULD FORCE AN INEVITABLE ESCALATION OF FIGHTING UNTIL THE
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COUNTRY'S NATIONAL IDENTITY WOULD BE LOST. ONE COULD THEN SEE
PAKISTAN'S NEIGHBORS STEPPING IN FOR A PIECE OF WHAT REMAINED
OF THE COUNTRY. ALTHOUGH WE DO NOT BELIEVE THIS SITUATION IS
IMMINENT IN PAKISTAN, THE STRAINS ON THE ARMY AND THE NATION
CAUSED BY THE CONTINUING POLITICAL DIVISIONS MUST BE RECKONED
WITH IN CONSIDERING THE NATION'S FUTURE.
CONSTABLE

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From: ISLAMABAD
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t197705110/baaaewio.tel
Line Count: 488
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Message ID: b96fe888-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 9
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2347063
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: THE ALTERNATIVES TO BHUTTO
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, PK, (BHUTTO, ZULFIKAR ALI)
To: STATE INFO ANKARA MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/b96fe888-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009